DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 060 454 AC 012 473

AUTHOR	Christiansen, John R.; And Others
TITLE	Participation and Attitudes of County Board Chairmen and Fair Secretaries; Preliminary Report Number 6. Wisconsin County and District Fair Study.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin Univ., Madison. Center of Applied Sociology.
SPONS AGENCY	Wisconsin Univ., Madison, Univ. Extension.
REPORT NO	Prelim-R-6
PUB DATE	71
NOTE	40p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrative Personnel; Attitudes; Community Responsibility; *County Programs; *Educational Programs; *Expositions; Males; Middle Aged; Participant Involvement; Questionnaires; Rural Farm Residents; State Programs; *Youth Opportunities
IDENTIFIERS	*Wisconsin

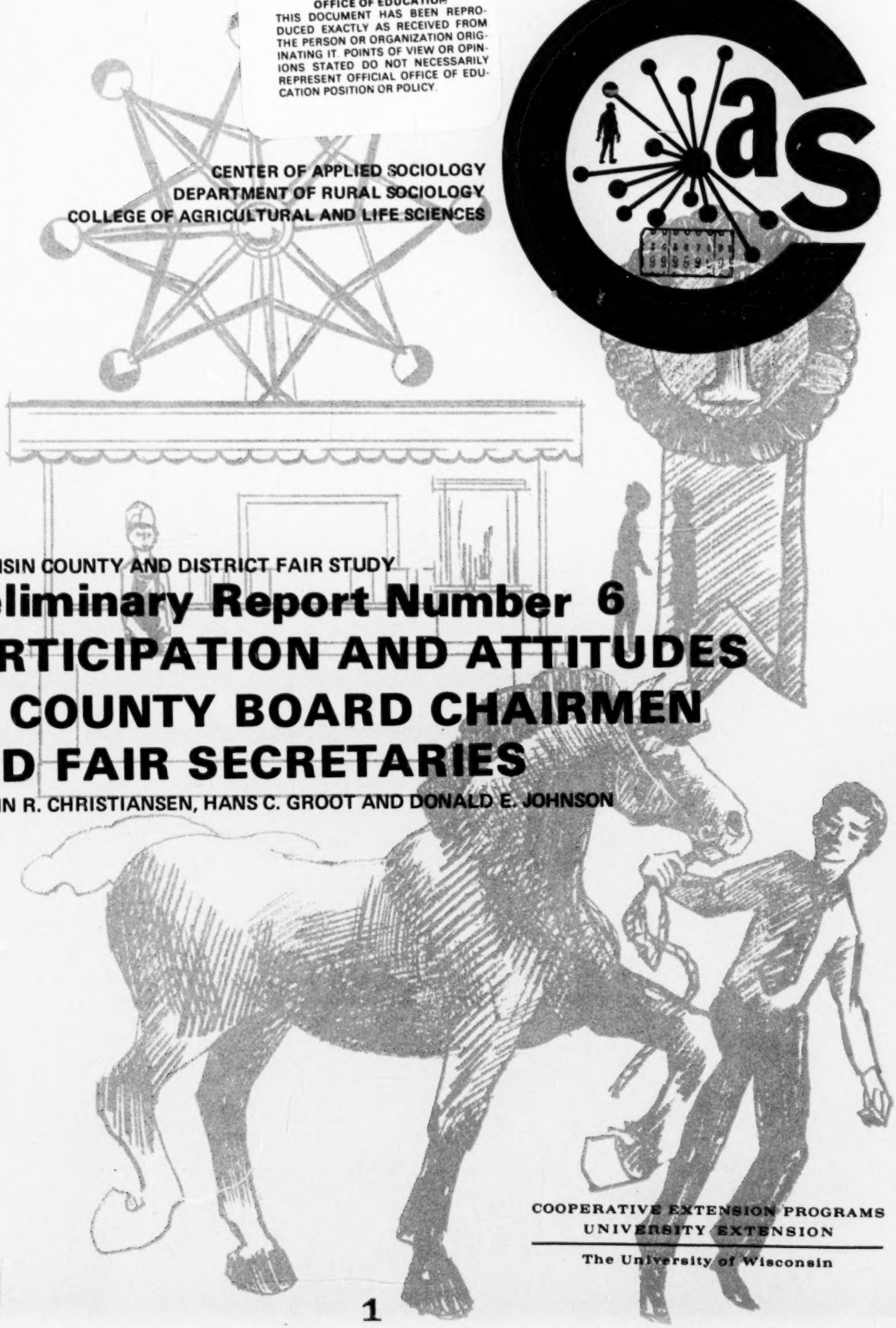
ABSTRACT

Fifty-five county board chairmen and 69 fair secretaries responded to mailed questionnaires dealing with: (1) their own social characteristics, (2) ownership and operation of county and district fairs in Wisconsin, and (3) their opinions regarding desirable aspects and changes in these fairs. The social characteristics of county board chairmen and fair secretaries were similar. All of the board chairmen were males; 88% of the secretaries were males. The average ages were 57 and 52, respectively. Compared with other people in the state, board chairmen and fair secretaries were found to be relatively well educated generally. Most of both groups had attended more than one county or district fair, but had not attended the State Fair. Most fair operations represent a complex mix of public and private enterprise; the majority in the state are private. However, county governments usually own the land and are involved in the construction or upkeep of the fair buildings; they also make cash contributions to the fairs. The respondents wanted to have both junior and open-class exhibits at their fairs. Specific suggestions for making fairs more educationally valuable for young people included greater community support, improved programs, and greater involvement of the young people in planning and operating the fairs. (Author/DB)

ED 060454

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

CENTER OF APPLIED SOCIOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES



WISCONSIN COUNTY AND DISTRICT FAIR STUDY

Preliminary Report Number 6
PARTICIPATION AND ATTITUDES OF COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMEN AND FAIR SECRETARIES

BY JOHN R. CHRISTIANSEN, HANS C. GROOT AND DONALD E. JOHNSON

1971

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAMS
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION
The University of Wisconsin

AC012473

PREFACE

The Center of Applied Sociology has accepted the responsibility for evaluating county and district fairs in Wisconsin. This is the sixth of nine proposed reports being developed by the Center dealing with this evaluation. The evaluation project is being made easier by the excellent cooperation of many individuals and groups who are deeply concerned about the future of fairs in the state. Among these are the following whom we gratefully recognize and thank:

University Extension and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin, co-sponsors of the study; the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Local Affairs and Development, State of Wisconsin, who have legal authority for the supervision and coordination of fairs; the Wisconsin Association of Fairs and its president, W. A. Uthmeier; the Wisconsin Exposition Center, Vernon G. Wendland, Administrator, and Leslie C. Hayden, Supervisor of County and District Fairs. Most importantly, the hundreds of Wisconsin citizens who have responded in such splendid fashion to requests for vitally needed information.

The leader of this project is Dr. John R. Christiansen, Visiting Professor of Sociology from Brigham Young University, assisted by Dr. Hans C. Groot, Department of Agricultural Journalism, and Mrs. Lorna Miller, specialist with the Center of Applied Sociology.

Donald E. Johnson, Director
Center of Applied Sociology
August, 1971

CONTENTS

		Page
	Preface	
	Contents	
	Summary	
	Implications	
I	Introduction	1
	Objectives of the Study	
	Methodology	
II	Characteristics of County Board Chairmen and Fair Secretaries	2
	Sex	
	Age	
	Education	
	Place of Residence	
	Occupation	
	County Fair Attendance	
	State Fair Attendance	
	Attendance of Meetings of Wisconsin Association of Fairs	
III	County and District Fair Organization	6
	Fair Ownership	
	Fair Leadership	
	Fairgrounds Ownership and Maintenance	
	Fair Buildings Ownership and Maintenance	
	Construction of Buildings and Facilities	
	General County Aid to Fairs	
IV	County and District Fair Operation	13
	Gate Admission Price	
	Parking Price	
	Grandstand Show Price	
	Remuneration for Fair Board Members	
	Remuneration for Presidents of Fair Associations	
	Remuneration for Fair Secretaries	
V	Attitudes of County Board Chairmen and Fair Secretaries Toward Issues Facing Fairs	19
	Consolidation	
	Kinds of Exhibitors	
	Improvements Needed Most	
	Most and Least Important Aspects of Fairs	
	State Subsidy for Fairs	
	Eliminating the State Subsidy	

		Page
VI	General Attitudes of County Board Chairmen Toward County and District Fairs	25
	Retention of Fairs	
	Changing Importance of Fairs	
	Criteria for Measuring Fairs' Success	
	How Much Youths Learn From Exhibiting	
	What Youths Learn From Exhibiting	
	Harmful Aspects of Fairs for Youths	
	Making Fairs More Educationally Valuable	

SUMMARY

Fifty-five county board chairmen and 69 fair secretaries responded to mailed questionnaires dealing with: (1) their own social characteristics, (2) ownership and operation of county and district fairs in Wisconsin, and (3) their opinions regarding desirable aspects and changes in these fairs. Evidence was obtained which showed the respondents to be generally supportive of a continuation of fairs, but having definite ideas about how fairs might be upgraded. A basis for a renewed emphasis on the educational function of fairs was found despite the fact that most fairs are private social entities.

The social characteristics of county board chairmen and fair secretaries were similar. All of the board chairmen were males, as were 88 percent of the secretaries, and their average ages were 57 and 52 years, respectively. Board chairmen and fair secretaries were found to be relatively well educated generally, compared with other people in the state. About half of both groups lived in places with populations of 2,500 or more, and more fair secretaries held "professional" jobs than any other. Most board chairmen and fair secretaries had attended more than one county or district fair, but had not attended the State Fair. Most secretaries had attended both regional and state-wide meetings of the Wisconsin Association of Fairs.

Most fair operations represent a complex mix of public and private enterprise. The majority of fair organizations in the state are private rather than public entities. However, county governments usually own the land upon which fairs are held. Moreover, the counties frequently construct and own fair buildings, or at least contribute to their maintenance even when they are privately owned. Three-fourths of the county governments in the state contribute cash subsidies to the fairs,

and make other kinds of contributions as well. Many fair associations are stock companies which elect their officers from among the stockholders.

Admission policies and prices at fairs varied considerably. About half of them charged for admission to the gate, three out of five charged for parking, and three out of five charged for their grandstand shows.

Slightly over half of the presidents of fair associations received remuneration of some kind from the associations for their services. Nearly three-fourths of the secretaries likewise received some remuneration.

Attitudes of board chairmen and fair secretaries toward fairs were similar. Only a relatively few believed that their fairs should be consolidated. Most of these respondents wanted to have both junior and open-class exhibits at their fairs, and maintained that improved facilities for those exhibits were needed. The respondents further reported that the junior exhibits were the most important part of their fairs, and that the midway was least important. Most board chairmen believed that the state subsidy to county and district fairs for premiums should be maintained at the same level; whereas most secretaries thought the subsidy should be increased. Seven out of 10 respondents felt that an elimination of the state subsidy would so weaken many fairs that some would have to close. A majority of the respondents believed that fair boards should be given more authority to administer the state-aid funds.

Nearly all county board chairmen maintained that local fairs should be continued, with many indicating that the fairs were increasing in importance in their counties. Most chairmen thought that a fair's success should be judged on the basis of the number of exhibitors and the extent of community involvement rather than on their money-making abil-

ities. These men believed that youths learned much from exhibiting, particularly about judging and evaluating, and sportsmanship. However, some of the chairmen believed that influences harmful to youths existed at fairs as well, and named the midway, beer sales, unsupervised activities, and other activities as examples. Specific suggestions for making fairs more educationally valuable for young people were also given. These included greater community support, improved programs, and greater involvement of the young people themselves in the actual planning and operation of the fairs.

IMPLICATIONS

Both chairmen and secretaries appear to place a high value on the educative function of fairs, particularly for youths. They recognize, moreover, that facilities need to be improved markedly for exhibiting at many fairs throughout the state. However, if fairs reap lucrative rewards for switching their emphasis from educational to recreational activities, and more fair association members receive substantial remuneration from fair profits, it is questionable whether the educational aspects of fairs will be enhanced unless state or county governments see that it is done.

In view of the strong supportive opinions of both county board chairmen and fair secretaries, it appears entirely feasible that some means can be devised to systematically upgrade the facilities for exhibiting in return for aid by counties. Such trade-offs could easily be built into the existing system of awarding state premium monies to county and district fairs.

Not only might facilities for exhibiting be improved, but potentially harmful and illegal influences currently being either ignored or

tolerated at fairs may be eliminated. These include beer sales to minors and various kinds of cheating at the midways.

More positively, following the suggestions given by board chairmen for: (1) increased involvement of youths in planning and operations of the fairs, and (2) remaking the fair program to make it more attractive to the public, could revitalize county and district fairs. It could also work to maintain the delicate balance between recreational, educative, and social functions that is needed to maximize the social benefit of fairs.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the number of persons attending county and district fairs in Wisconsin has been equal to about half the state's total population.[1] In 1970, for example, an estimated 2,885,721 people attended Wisconsin's county and district fairs--a number equivalent to 65 percent of the state's 1970 population. Data from other studies, and preliminary data from the present study, indicate that the fairs meet many needs of participants. These needs include social, recreational, economic and educational.

Determining the extent to which Wisconsin's county and district fairs meet these needs, particularly the educational needs of its citizens, is a major goal of the overall study. As shown in an earlier report, most states, including Wisconsin, have provided financial aid to county and district fairs for more than 100 years.[2] Justification for such usage of public monies has generally involved the educative role which fairs are thought to perform. State subsidies for premiums (prizes) to exhibitors has been the most common form of state aid. Whether continued expenditure of public monies for promoting fair activities is justified in our rapidly changing, highly urbanized society is being questioned. The present study will help answer that question.

Objectives of the Study

The basic objective of the study reported herein was to examine the organization and functions of Wisconsin's county and district fairs as viewed from the perspectives of county board chairmen and fair secretaries. To adequately achieve this basic objective, the study had three sub-objectives. The first of these was to provide a description of county board chairmen and fair secretaries themselves. This will be done so as to provide some indication of the kinds of people who are

involved in decision-making regarding fairs. The second subobjective was to explore the relationship between the public and private sectors in fair operations. Such information will permit the public to better answer the question "Am I getting my money's worth out of County and District Fairs." A third subobjective was to assess the changes deemed desirable by county board chairmen and fair secretaries. Such information will likely provide a basis for estimating: (1) whether problems perceived by chairmen and secretaries are congruent with those perceived by others interested in fairs, and (2) what changes should be made in the operation of these to make them more valuable social institutions for the people of the state.

Methodology

The geographical area selected for this study was the entire state of Wisconsin. Mailed questionnaires were sent in March, 1971 to chairmen of the county boards of supervisors in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties. Of this number, 55 (76%) were returned, all of which were found to be usable. Questionnaires to each of the 76 secretaries of state-aided county and district fairs were also mailed in March, 1971. A total of 74 (97%) of these questionnaires were returned, and 69 found to be usable. The information obtained from these two state-wide surveys were edited, coded, punched into machine cards, and analyzed using the UNIVAC 1108 computer at the University of Wisconsin Computer Center.

CHARACTERISTICS OF COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMEN AND FAIR SECRETARIES

A description of the social and economic characteristics of county board chairmen and fair secretaries can be useful in many ways. Per-

haps the most important of these is that it can give some indication of the decision-making orientations and capabilities of people who make important decisions regarding fairs.

Before presenting specific characteristics of the respondents, the roles of county board chairmen and fair secretaries should be discussed in general. The roles of these two groups of respondents vary considerably, and yet each is involved in making decisions which have far-reaching consequences for county and district fairs.

Each person designated as a "county board chairman," in this report is a person who has been elected as chairman of a county board of supervisors by fellow board members. These boards exist in each Wisconsin county, and are composed of elected representatives from approximately equal population units in the county. Reapportionment of these units takes place periodically throughout the state. According to Wisconsin statutes, the maximum number of members on each board varies according to county population; the maximum number permitted is 47. The actual size of boards in Wisconsin presently ranges from 7 in Menominee to 47 in Dane County with the average size being about 25. Board members are compensated for their services from public funds.

County boards have overall responsibility for supervising governmental services in counties. Their responsibilities concern highways, parks, public welfare, hospitals and homes, law enforcement, zoning, libraries, and agriculture. It is under the agricultural aegis that decisions regarding the support and operations of county and district fairs usually occur.

County and district fair secretaries have been appointed in all of Wisconsin's 76 state-aided county and district fairs, and in the approximately 24 non-state-aided fairs. Generally, these people are

appointed by fair boards, and serve as executive secretaries or managers of the fair's overall operations. Subject to the fair boards' approval, their work usually includes such things as planning the budget, hiring personnel, selecting entertainment, allocating concessions, supervising fairgrounds maintenance, determining how much is spent on premiums for each exhibiting class, and supervising the bookkeeping. A more complete statement as to their rewards for such service follows in this report.

Sex

Most county board chairmen and fair secretaries were males. In fact, all of the county board chairmen were males as were 88 percent of fair secretaries.

Age

The average (median) age of both county board chairmen and fair secretaries is relatively high compared with the age distribution throughout the state. The average age of county board chairmen is 57 years. In 1970 the average age of males in Wisconsin was 26, and was 27 for both males and females. The average age of all fair secretaries was 52 years. This average places board chairmen and fair secretaries in the upper one-fourth of the age distribution in the state.[3]

Education

Both county board chairmen and fair secretaries are well educated compared to other people in the state. In 1960, the average years of school completed by persons 25 years of age or older in Wisconsin was 10.4. By sex the average was 10.9 for females and 9.8 for males.[4] Based on simple, straight-line predictive methods, the average years of school completed in 1970 by all those 25 years of age or older in Wis-

consin was estimated to be 11.5 years. Even so, the average years of school completed by board members is 12.8, or more than one year above the estimated average for the state. Fair secretaries had completed 14.4 years of school on the average, or the equivalent of slightly more than two years of college. By comparison, the average years of school completed by all persons 25 years of age or older in the United States in 1969 was 12.1.[5]

Place of Residence

In 1970, 34 percent of the total state population was living in rural areas; that is, in places of 2,500 population or smaller.[6] As noted in an earlier report, about 80 percent of exhibitors at county and district fairs live in rural areas.[7] Slightly more than half (58%) of the county board chairmen, and somewhat less than half (44%) of fair secretaries likewise live in rural areas of the state.

Occupation

Only fair secretaries were asked about their occupations. More fair secretaries' jobs were in the "professional" category than any other (38%). The next largest occupational category was "retired" (15%), followed by "white collar" (13%), "salesman" (10%), and "blue collar" (8%). Only six percent of the secretaries were "farmers," with "proprietors" and "housewives" each making up five percent of the fair secretary total. Fair secretaries are atypical of the general Wisconsin population owing to their disproportionate representation in "professional" occupations. In 1960, only 10 percent of employed Wisconsin residents were "professionals," and 7 percent were farmers.[8]

County Fair Attendance

Most county board chairmen and fair secretaries attended more than one county or district fair in 1970. Board chairmen, on the average,

attended two fairs; whereas fair secretaries had attended about three. Seven percent of the board chairmen had not attended any local fair, but 49 percent had attended two or more fairs. Twenty percent of the secretaries had attended their own fair only, but 14 percent had attended five or more fairs. Attendance at more than one fair is almost certain to provide fair secretaries with opportunities for comparing the strengths and weakness of the various fairs, and a basis for improving their own fairs.

State Fair Attendance

Attendance at the Wisconsin State Fair in West Allis during 1970 was limited to less than one-fifth of both county board chairmen and county and district fair secretaries. Approximately 16 percent of the board chairmen and 17 percent of the secretaries attended the state fair in 1970. This finding, coupled with that concerning county and district fair attendance, suggests that the state fair has relatively little drawing power and interest for the respondents in this study.

Attendance at Meetings of Wisconsin Association of Fairs

Judging from their response to questions concerning attendance at both district and state meetings of the Wisconsin Association of Fairs, fair secretaries find that these meetings fill important needs. More than four of every five (83%) secretaries returning questionnaires reported that they had attended a district meeting of their fair association, and about two-thirds (65%) of them had attended the state-wide annual meeting. County chairmen were not questioned concerning their affiliation with or activity in the Wisconsin Association of Fairs.

COUNTY AND DISTRICT FAIR ORGANIZATION

County and District fairs in Wisconsin bring together a complex mix of disparate organizations and interests. At most fairs, all levels of

government (federal, state, county and community) are represented in some way. Moreover, civic, youth, and business organizations are often involved in addition to organizations involved with carnivals, concessions, and rides. Interests range from highly altruistic to monetarily exploitive, and from educative to pleasure-seeking. All of these varied organizations and interests are themselves in turn organized into a county fair by fair organizations. It is the composition and functioning of fair organizations that will be briefly examined in this section.

Fair Ownership

Most organizations which operate county and district fairs in Wisconsin are private rather than public entities. There is some disagreement between the opinions of fair secretaries and county board chairmen as to the exact proportions, but they agree on the fact that the majority of fairs are privately owned.

Regarding the fairs in their own counties, 44 percent of the board chairmen indicated that they were publicly owned, and 56 percent indicated they were privately owned. Twenty-eight percent of the fair secretaries indicated that their fairs were publicly owned, and 72 percent reported they were not.

This difference of opinion on fair ownership might be explained in a number of ways. First, the questions asked the two classes of respondents were not exactly the same. Second, the board chairmen are not quite as well represented in the study as are fair secretaries. Third, it is possible that board chairmen are not as familiar with the operation of fairs in their counties as are fair secretaries, and the public service nature of the fairs may present an appearance of public ownership.

The nature of ownership varied greatly. In addition to county ownership with administration being done by county boards, fair ownership was

also maintained by private, non-profit stock corporations; 4-H Club leaders associations; agricultural societies; and public corporations with elected officers. Additionally, combinations of public and private ownership organizations were mentioned.

Fair Leadership

The methods used in selecting officers for county and district fairs organizations in Wisconsin are as varied as the fair organizations themselves. Most fairs are supervised by a group of officers making up a fair committee or board. These committees or boards are selected in different ways as shown in Table 1.

Fairgrounds Ownership and Maintenance

Fair secretaries reported that county governments usually own the land upon which county and district fairs are held. After counties, the organizations which own fairgrounds--listed in order of frequency--are: agricultural societies, private corporations, cities or counties combined with agricultural societies, and cities or counties combined with private corporations (Table 2).

Maintenance of fairgrounds is usually done by owners. However, many fairgrounds owned by counties are maintained by someone else, most often agricultural societies or private corporations (Table 2).

Fair Buildings Ownership and Maintenance

As in the case of fairgrounds ownership, nearly half (46%) of fair buildings were owned by county governments (Table 3). Buildings at most other fairs were owned mostly by agricultural societies, private corporations, or agricultural societies together with other organizations. Many kinds of ownership patterns exist, however. One fair secretary reported that at his fair the grandstand was owned by the city, and the youth building was owned by the county.

Table 1.--Method of Selecting Fair Boards or Committees for County and District Fairs, Wisconsin 1971.

Method of selecting fair boards or committees	Number of fairs using method	Percentage of fairs using method
Selected by members of fair association	15	27
Elected by stockholders or shareholders	13	24
Appointed or elected by county board	12	22
Ex officio--because of holding other positions*	4	7
Elected by the public at annual meeting	1	2
Other (no information, incomplete, unclassifiable)	10	18
TOTAL	55	100

*County agents, county board chairmen, 4-H council representatives, etc.

Table 2.--Organizations Owning and Maintaining County and District Fairgrounds, State-Aided Fairs, Wisconsin 1971.

Organizations	Percentage of fair-grounds owned (N = 69)	Percentage of fair grounds maintined (N = 69)
County	48	33
Agricultural society	17	25
Private corporation	15	20
City or county and agricultural society	13	10
City or county and private corporation	1	7
Other (no information, incomplete, unclassifiable)	6	5
TOTAL	100	100

Table 3.--Organization Owning and Maintaining County and District Fair Buildings, State-Aided Fairs, Wisconsin 1971.

Organizations	Percentage owning buildings (N = 69)	Percentage maintaining buildings (N = 69)
County	46	39
Agricultural society	22	25
Private corporation	17	18
City or county and agricultural society	9	7
City or county and private corporation	3	6
Other (no information, incomplete, unclassifiable)	3	5
TOTAL	100	100

Fewer buildings were maintained, than were owned by counties; whereas private corporations and agricultural societies reportedly maintained more buildings than they owned (Table 3). It seems likely that many kinds of agreements for building use, ownership, and maintenance exist throughout the state.

Construction of Buildings and Facilities

Payment for construction of new buildings and facilities usually seem to be the responsibility of the county--at least in part. At one-third (33%) of the fairs, the county had responsibility for such construction exclusively. At one-fifth (22%) of the fairs, the county together with either private corporations or voluntary organizations such as 4-H, agricultural societies, and dairy farmers' associations paid for erecting new buildings or adding new facilities to fairgrounds. Agricultural societies were responsible for new building construction at 23 percent of the fairs, and private corporations were responsible for construction at 17 percent of the fairs. Information on the remainder was either incomplete or unclassifiable. Thus, over half of the fairs rely upon county funding for new building or facilities construction, with agricultural societies and private corporations responsible for new building construction at most other fairs.

General County Aid to Fairs

County and district fairs in Wisconsin were almost all aided in some way by county governments. In fact, 54 of the 55 county board chairmen who returned questionnaires indicated that their county governments aided the fairs even though the ownership of these fairs, in some instances, was in the hands of private corporations. In 75 percent of the cases, this aid included yearly cash subsidies. Slightly less than half (44%) of fairs were helped by county governments providing free use

of grounds and buildings. About one-third (34%) of the fairs received free maintenance of fair facilities; and in 18 percent of the fairs the county agreed to cover any fair deficits. Forty-six (84%) of the board chairmen indicated that their counties paid officials who operated the fair, at least in part. Many other kinds of aid were given fairs by county governments in addition to those already mentioned in this report, such as financially aiding the 4-H clubs for their displays at the fair, and providing county employees for building roads on the fairgrounds.

According to the 1970 Report on Wisconsin County and District Fairs, county governments in the state contributed nearly as much ($301,144) to county and district fairs as did the state ($324,904). Overall, most county governments are apparently heavily committed to the perpetuation of county and district fairs.

COUNTY AND DISTRICT FAIR OPERATIONS

As mentioned in earlier reports, county and district fair operations in the state have been expanding generally. Last year, these fairs took in $3,227,045.81, and paid out as expenditures $3,044,830.65. Nearly one-half million dollars ($497,908.95) was paid out to exhibitors for premiums, of which the state paid $324,904.73. Most of the receipts come from gate and grandstand fees.[10] This section of the report will examine findings relative to this aspect of county and district fairs' operations. Information was obtained from fair secretaries only.

Gate Admission Price

Slightly over half (56%) of the fair secretaries returning questionnaires indicated that they charged adults for admission to the gate separate from parking fees. According to the 1970 Report on Wisconsin County and District Fairs, this figure was actually 58 percent.[11] Thus

about 44 percent of the fairs did not charge adults for admission. As shown in Table 4, the most frequent gate price reported for adults--if any was charged--was $1.00.

Even fewer fairs (23%) charged children for admission to the fair grounds. The most frequent admission price charged children was $.50; however, nearly an equal number of fairs charged $.25, and one secretary reported that children were charged $.75 at his fair (Table 5).

Parking Price

According to the fair secretaries who returned questionnaires, slightly more than three out of five (62%) fairs charged fair goers for parking their automobiles on the fairgrounds. Analysis of the 1970 Report on Wisconsin County and District Fairs indicated that this figure may be about 55 percent.[11] At 38 percent of the fairs, no charge was made for parking. Of the fairs who charged for parking, most (67%) charged $.50; 21 percent of them charged $.25; 5 percent charged $.75 per vehicle, and 7 percent charged $1.00 per vehicle.

As shown below, 28 (41%) of the 69 fair secretaries who completed questionnaires indicated that at their fairs both gate admissions and parking charges were assessed fair goers.

		Does Your Fair Charge for Parking?		
		Yes	No	Total
Does your fair charge for admission to gate?	Yes	28	11	39
	No	15	15	30
	Total	43	26	69

Grandstand Show Price

Nearly all (96%) of the fair secretaries reported that a grandstand show of some kind took place at their fairs. Of those fairs with grandstand shows, an admission price was charged by 61 percent (59% accord-

Table 4.--Percentage Distribution of Gate Admission Prices Charged Adults and Children at County and District Fairs, Wisconsin 1970.

Gate admission price	Percentage of fairs charging	
	Adults (N = 69)	Children (N = 69)
None	44	77
$ .25	0	10
$ .50	7	12
$ .75	16	1
$ 1.00	23	0
$ 1.25	6	0
$ 1.50	4	0
TOTAL	100	100

ing to the 1970 Report on Wisconsin County and District Fairs).[12]

The admission price to the grandstands shows varied considerably, but $1.50 was the most common price for adults, as well as being the highest price reported. For children, the most common price reported for children was $.50, with charges as high as $1.00 being reported by two fairs.

Of the 69 fairs for which data were obtained, 21 or 30 percent charged not only for admission through the gate and for parking, but for the grandstand show as well. Six of those 21 fairs did not charge for the grandstand show. One fair which assessed admission and parking fees did not have a grandstand show.

Remuneration for Fair Secretaries

Nearly three-fourths (74%) of the fair secretaries who returned questionnaires reported that they received some kind of financial remuneration for their work. As shown below, the most common means of paying fair secretaries for their work was through a yearly salary paid once a year.:

Kinds of remuneration received by fair secretaries	Percentage distribution (N = 69)
Yearly salary (lump sum paid annually)	32
None received	26
Yearly salary and reimbursement for expenses	10
Reimbursement for expenses	6
Regular monthly salary and reimbursement for expenses	6
Fixed amount for attending board meetings	4
Monthly salary during fair season and reimbursement for expenses	4
Other	12
Total =	100

Remuneration for Presidents of Fair Associations

Slightly over half (55%) of the fair secretaries reported that presidents of their fair associations received some kind of remuneration for their services. Fair association presidents at 44 percent of the fairs did not receive any remuneration, and one fair association (1%) did not have a president.

As shown below, there were many ways through which those presidents who were paid for their services received that pay:

Kinds of remuneration received by fair association presidents	Percentage distribution (N = 69)
None received (incl. no president)	45
Yearly salary (lump sum paid annually)	19
Yearly salary and reimbursement for expenses	10
Reimbursement for expenses	9
Fixed amount for attending board meetings	7
Fixed amount plus wage for work done during fair	7
Other	3
Total =	100

Remuneration for Fair Board Members

Most fair board members receive some kind of financial remuneration specifically for their fair work. Only one fair secretary reported that his fair did not have a fair board, and two secretaries gave incomplete answers to questions concerning remuneration of fair board members. Of the remaining 66 fair secretaries, 71 percent responded that their fair board members received some kind of remuneration for their services connected with the fair. Conversely, 29 percent of the secretaries indicated that their fair boards were not paid for their fair work.

The kinds of remuneration received by fair board members varied considerably as shown below:

Kinds of remuneration received by fair board members	Percentage distribution (N = 69)
None received (incl. no fair board)	29
Reimbursement for expense	18
Fixed amount for attending meetings	16
Fixed amount plus wage for work done during the fair	16
Yearly salary (lump sum paid annually)	7
Yearly salary and reimbursement for expenses	7
Other	6
Total =	100

An apparent inconsistency may be noted in the fact that fair secretaries reported that 45 percent of fair association presidents did not receive any remuneration for their services. On the other hand, only 29 percent of fair board members reportedly did not receive any remuneration. One would think that fair association presidents would be remunerated if anyone would. The findings as reported may explain the situation as it exists; however, it might be that some fair secretaries interpreted the question dealing with remuneation for fair association presidents as asking for special kinds of remuneration, above that which normally is given to board members.

ATTITUDES OF COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMEN AND FAIR SECRETARIES TOWARD ISSUES FACING FAIRS

Many issues of significance to the continued operation of county and district fairs confront those responsible for fairs and, indeed, all of the citizens of the state. Included among these are questions relating to the possible consolidation of some fairs, relation of county and district fairs to the state subsidy, and needed changes in fairs.

County board chairmen and fair secretaries were asked to respond to questions concerning these and other issues. Their responses are summarized below.

Consolidation

Some county board chairmen and fair secretaries thought that there were fairs which should be consolidated. Only three of the 69 secretaries (4%) definitely believed that their fairs should be consolidated. However, five other secretaries (7%) were of the opinion that "maybe" their fairs should be consolidated.

Six of the 55 board chairmen (11%) indicated they knew of fairs (not necessarily their own) which should be consolidated, and a few more thought that "maybe" some fairs should be consolidated. Listed below are the fairs which board chairmen and secretaries indicated might be consolidated:

Burnett County Agricultural Society Fair with Washburn County Junior Fair

Eau Claire County Junior Fair with Northern Wisconsin State Fair

Central Burnett County Fair with Burnett County Agricultural Society Fair

Rosholt Free Community Fair with Portage County Fair

Green Lake County Junior Fair with Alto Fair[13]

Kinds of Exhibitors

Considerable differences of opinion have been thought to exist as to whether both junior and open-class exhibiting should take place at state-aided fairs. Some persons associated with fairs have maintained that only junior-class exhibits should be permitted. As noted in an earlier report, 74 percent of junior-class exhibitors and 95 percent of open-class exhibitors responding to a questionnaire indicated they wanted both kinds of exhibitors.[14]

Responses from county board chairmen and fair secretaries were somewhat similar to those of the exhibitors themselves, and very similar to each other. Seventy-five percent and 83 percent of county board chairmen and fair secretaries, respectively wanted both kinds of exhibiting at their fairs. On the other hand, 16 percent of board chairmen and an identical percentage of secretaries wanted junior-class exhibiting only. The remaining percentages reflected "Don't know," and alternative opinions.

Improvements Needed Most

Most county board chairmen and fair secretaries indicated in their completed questionnaires that changes needed to be made at county and district fairs. Given below is a ranking of the three most needed changes according to these respondents:

Ranking of Needed Changes

County Board Chairmen	Fair Secretaries
1. Facilities for exhibiting (buildings, grounds, etc.)	1. Facilities for exhibiting (buildings, grounds, etc.)
2. Program (more activities, young people involvement, demonstrations, etc.)	2. Facilities for people (eating places, rest rooms, grandstands, etc.)
3. Organization (improved commercial exhibits, community support, etc.)	3. Facilities for animals (stalls, washing places, safety improvements, etc.)

Some agreement exists, therefore, between board chairmen and fair secretaries regarding needed changes at fairs. The fact that junior-class and open-class exhibitors found fault with the midway and prices, whereas these aspects of fairs' operations were rarely criticized by chairmen and secretaries, suggests that the means of improving fairs proposed by some may be incongruent with the views of others.[15] It likewise suggests that dialogue is needed among those associated with all aspects of county and district fair operations to develop a concerted program for making improvements.

Most and Least Important Aspects of Fairs

Considerable unanimity exists between county board chairmen and fair secretaries regarding the "single most important part" of the fair (Table 5). Three of every five board chairmen, and three of every four fair secretaries listed the junior-class exhibits as the most important part of their fairs. Sixty-seven percent of the chairmen and 77 percent of the secretaries indicated that exhibits by both junior and open-class entrants were the single most important part of their fairs. The opinion by chairmen and secretaries concerning the paramount place that exhibits have at fairs has also been observed among exhibit judges, educators, youth leaders,[16] and open-class exhibitors.[17] This finding suggests that a potentially strong basis for discussion and united action exists throughout the state among those interested in fairs.

About one in ten of the chairmen and secretaries named the beer stands as the most important part of their fairs. There is some basis for disagreement here, owing to the fact that some open-class exhibitors viewed the sale of beer to minors as a negative aspect of fairs.[18]

Four aspects of county and district fairs were considered to be relatively unimportant by board chairmen and fair secretaries (Table 5).

Table 5.--Percentage Distribution of County Board Chairmen and Fair Secretaries Responses' Concerning the Most Important and Least Important Aspects of County and District Fairs, Wisconsin 1971.

Aspects of Fairs	Most Important		Least Important	
	Board Chairmen (N = 55)	Secretaries (N = 69)	Board Chairmen (N = 55)	Secretaries (N = 69)
Junior exhibits	62	75	0	0
Beer stands	13	12	2	1
Midway	5	7	33	16
Open-class exhibits	5	2	4	7
Refreshment stands	2	0	6	17
Commercial exhibits	2	0	7	19
Grandstand show	0	3	15	15
Rides	0	0	9	1
More than one aspect named	2	0	9	15
Other	9	1	16	9
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

These were midways, grandstand shows, and commercial exhibits.

State Subsidy for Fairs

During the past 115 years the Wisconsin state legislature has offered financial assistance to those associated with exhibiting at county and district fairs. This state aid has largely taken the form of subsidies to exhibitors in the form of premiums or cash prizes.[19] Last year $340,000 was made available by the legislature for premiums. When asked whether this subsidy should be continued, and if so in what form, the majority (60%) of county board chairmen indicated that it should be continued at the same level. About one-third (31%) of the chairmen maintained the subsidy should be increased; whereas 7 percent felt it should be reduced, and 2 percent believed it should be eliminated entirely.

Fair secretaries generally had similar opinions about the state aid. Slightly over one-half (52%) of them, however, responded that the subsidy should be increased; 42 percent indicated it should be maintained at the same level, 2 percent thought it should be reduced, 2 percent believed it should be eliminated, and the remainder had some other opinion concerning the subsidy.

Eliminating the State Subsidy

Opinions concerning the effect on fairs of eliminating the state subsidy for premiums varied little between county board chairmen and fair secretaries. In fact, there was a total difference of only 12 percent in their responses. About 7 out of 10 board chairmen and fair secretaries (69% and 72%, respectively) responded that the elimination of the state subsidy for fairs would weaken the fairs to the extent that some would likely close. Seven percent of both kinds of respondents believed that the most important effect would be a reduction in

exhibitors. Many other kinds of answers were given as well. For example, some respondents believed that eliminating the state subsidy would prohibit future growth of the fairs. Other respondents maintained that the effect would result in a change from the Danish system of judging wherein all contestants receive some kind of a prize to another system involving fewer prizes. Still other respondents suggested that the fairs would only give ribbons as prizes, or try to raise the money from other sources.

Giving Fair Boards Greater Authority

A related issue concerning the state subsidy centered on whether those monies should be used for premiums only, or whether they could be spent more effectively by fair boards. A majority (60%) of the county board chairmen thought that fair boards should be given authority to decide how each fair's share of the state aid should be spent. A slight majority (52%) of the fair secretaries disagreed on that issue, indicating that fair boards should not be given that authority. In agreement with the majority of fair secretaries that not more flexibility should be given fair boards for spending state-aid monies were 29 percent of the board chairmen, with 11 percent being undecided on the issue. Likewise undecided on the issue were 2 percent of the secretaries, with 45 percent being in favor of giving fair boards greater authority for spending the state-aid monies.

GENERAL ATTITUDES OF COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMEN TOWARD COUNTY AND DISTRICT FAIRS

No social institution such as the county fair can exist very long unless it has substantial support from many people. Such support comes only when these institutions meet relatively important social needs. In an attempt to measure how important county and district fairs are to the people of the state, and the basis of their importance, if any, county board chairmen were asked relevant questions. As elected officials, it was anticipated that opinions of people in the state might be reflected to some extent in the way board chairmen answered various questions about the importance of fairs. The questions dealt with whether fairs should be continued, possible educational benefits, the importance of fairs relative to other social institutions, and criteria for measuring fairs' success. Thus, these questions were asked only of county board chairmen.

Retention of Fairs

To provide an assessment of the importance of their local fairs, county board chairmen were asked whether they favored retention or elimination of them.

That little reticence exists on the part of board chairmen toward their fairs, is apparent by the fact that 94 percent of them clearly wanted to retain their fairs. Conversely, 2 percent of the board chairmen definitely indicated that they favored elimination of their local fairs, and 4 percent were "undecided" regarding the question.

Changing Importance of Fairs

In a related question, board chairmen were asked whether their fairs were "increasing," "decreasing," or "not changing" at all in their importance relative to other activities in their counties. Nearly two-thirds

(64%) of the board chairmen indicated that the relative importance of the fairs had not changed in their counties. On the other hand, about one-fourth (24%) of these respondents maintained that the fairs were actually increasing in importance compared with other activities in their counties. On balance, therefore, board chairmen in most counties are of the opinion that their fairs are at least holding their own in importance with other county activities.

Criteria for Measuring Fairs' Success

In an endeavor to ascertain whether county board chairmen tended to think of fairs as money-producing or educational ventures, they were asked to indicate what should be the main criteria for measuring a fair's success. Five answers were provided, two of which ("profit," and "attendance figures") were thought to support a money-making orientation; two others ("number of exhibitors," and "extent of community involvement in fair") were thought to express a greater value on education. A final answer which could be selected was "other" which provided a space to write in alternatives to those given.

In answering this question, more than half (55%) of the board chairmen selected "extent of community involvement in fair" as their first choice for measuring a fair's success. The answer, "number of exhibitors," was given next most frequently (13%). Both of these answers are thought to emphasize a strong interest in the educational activities of the fairs. Additionally, 9 percent of the board chairmen indicated a preference for both of the educationally-oriented alternatives mentioned. Thus, slightly more than three-fourths (77%) of the county board chairmen indicated their preference for criteria which likely reflect educational benefits deriving from fair activity.

None of the board chairmen selected "profit" as the main criteria for measuring a fair's success, whereas 9 percent selected "attendance figures." It is entirely possible, of course, that "attendance figures" could have conveyed a meaning similar to "community involvement" rather than one more closely connected with monetary gain. The remaining chairmen chose various combinations of alternatives given, while some few wrote in alternatives of their own.

How Much Youths Learn from Exhibiting

County Board chairmen were generally agreed that youths who exhibit at fairs learn considerably from that experience. As shown below, when asked how much youths learn from exhibiting, nearly 9 out of 10 chairmen responded "much" or "very much:"

How much youths learn from exhibiting	Percentage distribution of board chairmens' responses (N = 55)
Very much	58
Much	29
Some	9
Little	2
Nothing	2
	Total = 100

What Youths Learn From Exhibiting

While there was almost complete agreement among board chairmen that young people learn a good deal from exhibiting, there were a great many different responses given to the questions of what it was the young exhibitors learned. As shown below, the most frequent responses given regarding what youths learned as exhibitors were "judging and evaluation" and "sportsmanship."

What youths learn from exhibiting	Percentage distribution of chairmens' responses (N = 55)
Judging and evaluation	22
Sportsmanship	20
Responsibility	13
Social skills	13
Exhibit preparation	7
Showmanship	6
Specific skills	6
Nothing	2
Other (incl. no response)	11
Total =	100

Harmful Aspects of Fairs for Youths

More than two-thirds (69%) of the board chairmen maintained they did not know of anything about county and district fairs that was harmful to youths. On the other hand, the minority (31%) maintained there were things about fairs which were harmful. More than any other, county board chairmen singled out the midway as possibly being harmful to youths. Such parts of the midway as: games of chance, sideshows, unsafe rides, and high prices were cited by chairmen as being harmful to youths.

In addition to the midway, however, board chairmen mentioned other things which they believed were harmful to youths such as: beer sales to minors, inadequately supervised activities, too much emphasis on winning, and unfair competition as being detrimental to youths who patronize fairs.

Making Fairs More Educationally Valuable

Most county board chairmen had suggestions for making fairs more educationally valuable for young people. While a little more than one-third (38%) of the chairmen did not have specific ideas for making the fairs more educational most did have specific suggestions. (Table 6)

Most of these recommended changes deal with greater involvement on the part of young people, and a tendency toward revitalizing fairs to keep up with present interests, activities, and abilities of young people.

Table 6.--Distribution of Board Chairmen' Responses Regarding Changes Needed to Make County and District Fairs More Educationally Valuable to Young People, Wisconsin 1971.

Needed changes	Board chairmen's responses	
	Number	Percentage
None	21	38
More community support (more news coverage, etc.)	13	23
Improved programs (live demonstrations, contests, attract city 4-H, mixers)	7	13
Improved judging (explain judgments, peer and conference judging)	5	9
Involve young people more in planning programs, and include non-4-H members	4	7
Lower gate prices and higher premiums	2	4
Eliminate undesirable sales (beer, cigarettes, etc.) and de-emphasize midway	1	2
Change exhibiting rules to favor young people	1	2
Upgrade midway, (stop cheating, better prizes, lower prices)	1	2
TOTAL	55	100

FOOTNOTES

[1]John R. Christiansen, Hans C. Groot, and Donald E. Johnson, Background of the Study, Preliminary Report Number 1, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and University Extension, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1971, p. 7.

[2]Background of the Study, pp. 2-3

[3]U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population: 1970, General Population Characteristics, Wisconsin, Advance Report PC(V2)-51, p. 4.

[4]U.S. Bureau of the Census, PC(1)-51C, p. 173.

[5]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1970 Washington, D.C., 1970, p. 109.

[6]Advance Report on 1970 Census of Population in Wisconsin, Department of Administration, State of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, January, 1971, p. 4.

[7]John R. Christiansen, Hans C. Groot, and Donald E. Johnson, Participation and Attitudes of Open and Junior-Class Exhibitors. Preliminary Report Number 2, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and University Extension, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1971, p. 4.

[8]U.S. Census of Population: 1960, PC(1)-51C, p. 4.

[9]Report on Wisconsin County and District Fairs: 1970, Wisconsin Exposition Center, Department of Local Affairs and Development, State Fair Park, Milwaukee, pp. 3-10.

[10]Report on Wisconsin County and District Fairs: 1970, p. 2.

[11]Report on Wisconsin County and District Fairs: 1970, pp. 35-42.

[12]Report on Wisconsin County and District Fairs: 1970, pp. 35-42.

[13]See Preliminary Report Number 3 in this series for a listing of fairs which should be consolidated according to youth leaders, Vo-Ag teachers, county agents, 4-H leaders, and fair judges.

[14]Participation and Attitudes of Open and Junior Class Exhibitors, p. 7.

[15]Participation and Attitudes of Open and Junior Class Exhibitors, pp. 19-20.

[16]Hans C. Groot, John R. Christiansen, and Donald E. Johnson, Participation and Attitudes of Judges, Educators and Youth Leaders. Preliminary Report Number 3. College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and University Extension, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1971.

[17]Participation and Attitudes of Open and Junior Class Exhibitors, p. 23.

[18]Participation and Attitudes of Open and Junior Class Exhibitors, p. 20.

[19]John R. Christiansen, Hans C. Groot, and Donald E. Johnson, Background of the Study, Preliminary Report Number 1, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and University Extension, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1971, p. 5.

* *

Other reports in this series, to date, include:

Preliminary Report Number 1: Background of the Study, by John R. Christiansen, Hans C. Groot and Donald E. Johnson.

Preliminary Report Number 2: Participation and Attitudes of Open and Junior Class Exhibitors, by John R. Christiansen, Hans C. Groot and Donald E. Johnson.

Preliminary Report Number 3: Participation and Attitudes of Judges, Educators and Youth Leaders, by Hans C. Groot, John R. Christiansen and Donald E. Johnson

Preliminary Report Number 4: Participation Trends and Publicity, Hans C. Groot, John R. Christiansen and Donald E. Johnson.

Preliminary Report Number 5: Participation and Attitudes of Commercial Exhibitors and Associate Members, by John R. Christiansen, Hans C. Groot and Donald E. Johnson

Copies of these reports are available from:

Center of Applied Sociology
Department of Rural Sociology
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

ERIC Clearinghouse
APR 18 1972
on Adult Education